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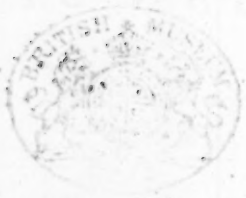
THE SORROWS OF *WERTER.*



THE SORROWS OF *WERTER:*

A GERMAN STORY.

——Tædet cœli convexa tueri.

VOL. II.

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WERTER, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

20th October, 1771.

I Arrived here yeſterday. The miniſter is indiſpoſed, and will not go out for ſome days. If he was leſs peeviſh and moroſe all would do well. I ſee it but too plainly, heaven has deſtined me to ſevere trials: but I won't be diſheartened; one may bear any thing with a little levity.

I can ſcarcely help ſmiling at the word which has juſt eſcaped me; a little of that levity, which I am totally without, would make me the happieſt of men. And muſt I deſpair of my faculties, and of the gifts of nature, whilſt others of far inferior ſtrength and talents are parading before me with the utmoſt ſatisfaction in themſelves? Great God! amidſt the bleſſings thou haſt deigned to ſhower down upon me why was I not endowed with ſelf-complacency and confidence? But patience, and all will I hope be better; for I will own to you, my dear friend, that you were in the right: ſince I have been

obliged

obliged to mix continually with other men; ſince I have had an opportunity of obſerving their deſigns, their conduct, their converſation, I am become more eaſy, and more ſatisfied with myſelf. As we naturally compare ourſelves with every thing we meet, our happineſs or miſery depends on the objects which are brought into compariſon with us, and in this reſpect nothing is more dangerous than ſolitude. There our imagination, which is ever diſpoſed to riſe, takes a new flight on the wings of fancy, and forms a chain of beings, of which we are the laſt and moſt inferior. All things ap-

pear greater than they really are, and all ſeem ſuperior to us; and this operation of the mind is natural. We are continually feeling our own imperfections; we think we have obſerved in others qualities which we have not, and conclude they alſo poſſeſs all we have ourſelves; and thus we have made a perfect, a happy man: —but ſuch a man exiſts only in our imaginations.

But when, in ſpite of weakneſs and diſappointment, we direct our endeavours to one end, and ſteadily perſevere in the purſuit of it, we often find that we have made more way though continually tacking,

than others with all the aſſiſtance of wind and tide; and yet that is a true judgment which we form of ourſelves from our ſituation with others, whether we are on a line with them, or before them.

LETTER XXXIX.

10th November.

I Begin to think my ſituation more tolerable: I am much occupied; and the number of actors, and the different parts they play, make a very amuſing variety in the ſcene. I have made an acquaintance with the Count of C—, and I eſteem him

more and more every day. He is a man of ſtrong underſtanding and great diſcernment: but though he ſees farther than other people, he is not therefore cold in his temper and manner; his ſenſibility ſurpaſſes all his other qualities. One morning that I went to ſpeak to him upon buſineſs, he expreſſed a friendſhip for me; by the firſt word he perceived that we underſtood each other, and that he might talk to me in a ſtyle different from that he made uſe of with moſt of the others.

I cannot expreſs the ſatisfaction I receive from the openneſs of his conduct with regard to me. It is the

the greateſt of pleaſures when a delicate mind thus lays itſelf open to one.

LETTER XL.

December 24.

I Foreſaw it; the miniſter occaſions me a number of vexations. 'Tis the moſt punctilious blockhead under heaven; he goes on ſtep by ſtep, with the trifling minuteneſs of an old woman. But how can a man be pleaſed with other people who is never ſatisfied with himſelf? I like to go on with buſineſs regularly and

with alacrity; and when it is finiſhed, that it ſhould be finiſhed. But not ſo with him; he is capable of returning my draught to me, and ſaying, "It will do; but go over it again however, there is always ſomething to correct; one may find a better phraſe, or a properer word."—I then loſe all patience, and wiſh myſelf at the devil. Not a conjunction, not one connecting word muſt be omitted; and as to the tranſpoſitions, which I like, and which flow naturally from my pen, he is their mortal foe. If every ſentence is not expreſſed exactly in the ſtyle of the office,

office, he is quite loſt. 'Tis deplorable to have any connection with ſuch a perſonage.

The only thing which gives me ſatisfaction, is my intimacy with Count C—. He very frankly told me the other day, how much he was diſpleaſed with the difficulties and delays of the miniſter; that people of his caſt muſt make every thing troubleſome to themſelves, and to others: "But," added he, "one muſt ſubmit, as a traveller that is obliged to climb over a mountain; if the mountain was not in the way, his road would undoubtedly be ſhorter and more convenient, but in fine,

fine, there it is, and he muſt go over it."

The old man perceives the Count's preference for me: it makes him angry. When I am preſent, he takes every opportunity to depreciate the Count: I naturally take up his defence, and that encreaſes his diſpleaſure. Yeſterday I was well aware that when he aimed a ſtroke at my friend, he meant that it ſhould alſo hit me.—" For the common affairs of the world," ſaid he, " the Count may do very well; his ſtyle is good, and he writes with facility; but, like other great geniuſes, he has no ſolid learning." I longed to ſtrike him;

for

for to what purpoſe is argument with ſuch a kind of animal? However, as that was not poſſible, I anſwered, with ſome warmth, that every reſpect was due to him, both for his underſtanding and his character; that he was the only man I had ever met with, whoſe extenſive genius raiſed him ſo high above the common level, and who yet retained all his activity in buſineſs. This was algebra to his conceptions; and I withdrew, leaſt ſome new abſurdity in him ſhould raiſe my choler too much. It is you that are the authors of my ill-fortune; you, all of you, who forced me to bend my neck to this

this yoke, and preached activity to me. If the man who plants potatoes, and carries them to town on market-days, is not a more active being than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the curſed galley to which I am now chained.

Diſtaſte and laſſitude, thoſe faſhionable miſeries which reign amongſt the ſilly people who affect an unmixt ſociety; the ambition of rank! how they toil, how they watch to gain precedence! What poor and contemptible paſſions, and how plain to be ſeen! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceaſes to entertain the company with

accounts

accounts of her family, and her eſtates. Any ſtranger who heard her would ſuppoſe ſhe was a ſilly creature, whoſe head was turned by ſome ſlight pretence at leaſt to rank, or the lordſhip of a manor; but ſtill more ridiculous, ſhe is the daughter of a ſteward's clerk in this neighbourhood. I cannot conceive how the human race can ſo debaſe itſelf.

I do indeed every day perceive more and more how abſurd it is to judge of others by one's ſelf. And it is with ſo much difficulty that I ſtop the ferment of my blood, and keep my heart at peace, that I very readily leave every one to purſue the

path

path he has choſen; but at the ſame time I aſk a like permiſſion for myſelf.

Theſe paltry diſtinctions between the inhabitants of the ſame town, are what diſturb me moſt. I know perfectly well, that inequality of conditions is neceſſary, and how much I myſelf gain by it. But I would not have this inſtitution come in my way and hinder me, when I might enjoy ſome pleaſure, ſome ſhadow of happineſs upon this earth.

I have lately made an acquaintance with a Miſs B. a very agreeable girl; who, notwithſtanding the formality and ſtiffneſs of the people about

about her, has retained a very eaſy and unaffected manner. The firſt converſation we had together, equally pleaſed us both; and when we parted I deſired leave to pay my reſpects to her; which ſhe granted in ſo obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the time to avail myſelf of it. She is not of this place, but lives here with an aunt. The countenance of the old virago diſpleaſed me at firſt ſight; however I paid her great attention, and often addreſſed myſelf to her. In about half an hour, I pretty nearly gueſſed what her niece has ſince acknowledged. This good aunt, who is in

years, with a ſmall fortune, and ſtill ſmaller ſhare of underſtanding, has no ſatisfaction but in the long liſt of her anceſtors; no protection but her noble birth; this is the defence, the rampart with which ſhe ſurrounds herſelf; and her only amuſement is ſtanding at her window to look down with ſovereign contempt on the ignoble heads which paſs under it in the ſtreet. This ridiculous old woman was formerly handſome, and many a young man was the ſport of her caprice: that was the golden age. Her charms faded, ſhe was forced to accept of an old half-pay officer, and be ſubſervient to his will:

will: that was the age of braſs. Now ſhe is a widow, and deſerted; was it not for her agreeable niece nobody would take notice of her:—this may truly be called the iron age.

LETTER XLI.

January 8, 1772.

WHAT men are theſe!—Form occupies their whole ſouls; they can employ their time and thoughts for a whole year together, in contriving how to get nearer, by one chair only, to the upper end of the table.—And don't call it idleneſs;

for on the contrary they increaſe their labour, by giving to theſe trifles the time they ought to employ in buſineſs. Laſt week, in a party upon the ice in ſledges, there was a diſpute for precedence, and the party was immediately broken up.

The idiots! they do not ſee that 'tis not the place which conſtitutes real greatneſs: the man who enjoys the higheſt poſt very rarely acts the principal part; many a king is governed by his miniſter, and many a miniſter by his ſecretary. Who is in that caſe to be accounted the firſt, and chief? Is it not the man who has

has the power or the addreſs to make the paſſions of others ſubſervient to his own deſigns?

LETTER XLII.

January 20.

I MUST write to you from hence, my dear Charlotte; from a cottage where I have been obliged to take ſhelter from a violent ſtorm. In all the time that I have ſpent in that melancholy town, amidſt ſtrangers—ſtrangers indeed to this heart—I have not been compelled to write to you: but in this cottage, in this retirement, in this ſort of impriſon-

ment, whilſt the ſnow and hail are driving againſt my little window, I find myſelf reſtored to you and to myſelf. The moment I entered, your figure preſented itſelf before my eyes, and the remembrance of you filled my heart. Oh! my Charlotte, the ſacred remembrance! the tender recollections! — Gracious Heaven! reſtore to me that firſt moment in which I beheld her!

Could you but ſee me, my dear Charlotte, in that vortex where every thing diſſipates and nothing touches me! My ſenſes are dried up; my heart is at no time full; I never ſhed the ſoft tears of tenderneſs; nothing,

thing, nothing touches me. I ſtand, as it were, before the rareeſhow; I ſee the little puppets move, and I ſay to myſelf it is a deception of optics. I am amuſed with theſe puppets, or rather I am myſelf one of them. I take the hand of the man who ſtands next to me, I feel that it is made of wood, I ſhudder and draw mine back. I have found but one being here that is of the ſame order with you, a Miſs B. She reſembles you, my dear Charlotte, if indeed it is poſſible for any thing to reſemble you. "Ah!" you will ſay "he has learnt to make elegant compliments." And there is ſome

truth in your obſervation. I have been prodigiouſly agreeable lately, not having it in my power to be any thing better. I have a great deal of wit too, and the women ſay that nobody underſtands better how to deal out panegyric—" and *lies*," you will add, for one always accompanies the other.—But I meant to talk to you of Miſs B. She has great ſenſibility, and a ſuperior underſtanding; her fine blue eyes ſhew evident marks of both. Her rank is a burthen to her, and gratifies no one paſſion of her ſoul; ſhe would gladly leave this crowd; and we often indulge our imagination in talking,

talking, for hours together, of happineſs in retired and country ſcenes, and near you, my dear Charlotte;—for ſhe knows you, ſhe does homage to you; but the homage is not exacted; ſhe loves you; and takes great pleaſure in hearing me talk of you.

Oh! why am I not at your feet in your favourite little room, and the dear children playing round us! If their noiſe became troubleſome to you, I would tell them a ſtory, and they would crowd about me with ſilent attention. The ſun is ſetting; his laſt rays ſhine on the ſnow which covers the face of the country; the

ſtorm is over, and I—muſt return to my dungeon. Adieu!—Is Albert with you, and what is he to you? Fool that I am! ſhould I aſk this queſtion?

LETTER XLIII.

February 17.

OUR miniſter and I don't ſeem as if we ſhould continue much longer together: his manner of treating a ſubject, and of doing buſineſs, is ſo abſurd, that I cannot help contradicting him very often, and doing things my own way; and then,

of

of courſe he thinks them very ill done. He mentioned ſomething of this kind lately in a letter to court, and I had a reprimand from the miniſter there—very gentle indeed—but ſtill it was a reprimand; and I had reſolved to reſign, when I received a private letter, before which I humbled myſelf, and adored the wiſe, the noble, the exalted genius which dictated it—which endeavoured to ſoothe my painful ſenſibility—expreſſed an approbation of my ſchemes, and an opinion of their weight and influence;—condeſcending to enquire into buſineſs, as well as to examine the ideas of an impe-

tuous

tuous young man. How I am exhorted, not to extinguiſh this fire, but to ſoften it, and keep it within due bounds, that it may be productive of good! So now I am no longer at variance with myſelf, but ſettled, determined—at leaſt for a week to come. Content and peace of mind are valuable things, my dear friend; but if they are precious, they are alſo tranſitory.

LETTER XLIV.

February 20.

GOD bleſs you, my dear friends! and may he grant to you that happineſs which he denies to me! I thank

I thank you, Albert, for having deceived me.—I waited for the wedding-day to be fixed, and on that day I intended with ſolemnity to have taken dear Charlotte's profile from the wall, and with ſome other papers to have buried it. You are now united, and her picture ſtill remains there. Well, let it remain! Why ſhould it not? Does not Charlotte find room for me in her heart? Yes, you may allow me to occupy the ſecond place there, and I will, I ought to keep it; I ſhould become furious if ſhe could forget —— Albert, that thought is hell.—May you be happy, Albert!—Charlotte, angel of light, may you be the happieſt of women!

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

March 15.

I HAVE juſt had an adventure which will drive me from hence: I loſe all patience.—Death!—it is not to be remedied, and you only are the cauſe of all this;—you that drove me on, and urged and tormented me;—you that made me take an employment I am by no means fit for. I have great reaſon now to be ſatisfied—ſo have you! But that I may not again be told, that the impetuoſity of my temper ruins every thing, I here ſend you, Sir, a plain and ſimple narration of the affair, as any mere chronicler of facts would relate it.

The

The Count of O— likes me, diſtinguiſhes me; it is known that he does; I have mentioned it to you a hundred times. Yeſterday I dined with him; it was the day on which all the nobility meet at his houſe. I never once dreamed of the aſſembly, nor that we ſubalterns were excluded. In ſhort I dined with the Count, and after dinner we went into the hall, and talked and walked backwards and forwards. Colonel B. who came in, joined in the converſation, and the time paſſed away till the company came. God knows I was thinking of nothing! when entered the right noble and right honourable Lady of T-, accompanied

nied by her huſband and their ſilly daughter, with her ſmall waiſt and flat neck; with diſdainful looks and a haughty air they paſſed by me. As I hate the whole race, I intended to go away, and was only waiting, till the Count had diſengaged himſelf from their impertinent prate, to take leave, when the agreeable Miſs B. came in. As I never ſee her but with pleaſure, I ſtayed and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive till after ſome time that ſhe ſeemed a little confuſed, and did not ſpeak to me with her uſual eaſe of manner. I was ſtruck with it. "Heavens!"

ſaid I to myſelf, " can ſhe too be like all the reſt ?" I was angry and going to withdraw ; but the deſire of examining farther into this matter kept me. The reſt of the company came. I ſaw the Baron F— enter with the ſame coat that he wore at the coronation of Francis the firſt ; the Chancellor, and his wife, who is old and deaf ; the Count of I—, whoſe Gothic dreſs made a ſtill greater contraſt to our modern coats, &c. &c. I ſpoke to thoſe that I knew amongſt them ; they were all very laconic in their anſwers. I was taken up with obſerving Miſs B. and did not ſee that the women were

whiſpering

whiſpering at the end of the room, and that by degrees the ſame whiſpering and murmuring got round amongſt the men, and that Madame S. was ſpeaking with great warmth to the Count—(this I have ſince learnt from Miſs B.)—At length the Count came up to me, and took me to the window.—"You know our ridiculous cuſtoms," he ſaid; "I perceive the company is rather diſpleaſed at your being here: I would not upon any account—" "I beg your excellency's pardon; I ought to have thought of it before: but I know you will excuſe this little inattention. I was going," I added, "ſome time

ago, but my evil genius kept me here;" and ſmiling, I bowed to take leave. He ſhook me by the hand in a manner which expreſſed every thing. I made a bow to the whole illuſtrious aſſembly, got into my chaiſe, and drove to M.—I contemplated the ſetting ſun from the top of the hill.—I read that beautiful paſſage in Homer, where the honeſt herdſmen are deſcribed receiving the king of Ithaca with ſo much hoſpitality; and I returned well pleaſed. When I went into the ſupper-room at night, there were but a few perſons aſſembled, and they had turned up a corner of the table-cloth, and

were playing at dice. The good-natured Adelin came up to me as ſoon as I entered, and in a low voice ſaid, "You have met with a very diſagreeable incident."—"Who, I?"—"The Count obliged you to withdraw from the aſſembly."—"Devil take the aſſembly!" ſaid I, "I was very glad to be gone." "I am rejoiced," he ſaid, "that you look upon the affair in that light; all that concerns me is, to find that it is talked of every where already." From that moment I began to think of it in a different manner. All thoſe that looked at me whilſt we were at table, I imagined were looking

ing at me on account of this incident; and bitterneſs entered my heart. And now that I am pitied wherever I go, and hear the triumph of my enemies; who ſay, "This is always the caſe with thoſe vain inſignificant perſonages who pretend to deſpiſe forms, and want to raiſe themſelves:" with other nonſenſe of the ſame kind.—I could plunge a dagger into my heart. Say what you will of philoſophy and fortitude: one may laugh at nonſenſe that has no foundation, but how is it poſſible to endure that theſe paltry raſcals ſhould have any hold of one?

LETTER XLVI.

March 16.

EVERY thing conſpires to drive me to extremities. I met Miſs B— walking to-day. I could not help joining her, and expreſſing my ſenſe of her altered manner towards me. "Oh! Werter," ſaid ſhe, with eagerneſs, "you who know my heart, how could you ſo ill interpret my diſtreſs? What did I not ſuffer for you from the firſt moment I entered the room! I foreſaw all that has happened; a hundred times I was upon the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S——s and

T——s

T——s would quit the aſſembly rather than ſtay in your company. I knew the Count could not break with them: and now all the talk"—I endeavoured to conceal my emotion, and aſked her what talk. "Oh! how much it has already coſt me!" ſaid the amiable girl, and tears came into her eyes.—I could ſcarce contain myſelf—I was ready to throw myſelf at her feet. "Explain yourſelf," I cried.—Her tears flowed, and I was quite frantic. She wiped them away without endeavouring to hide them. "You know my aunt," ſhe continued; "ſhe was preſent, and, good God! in what a light does

ſhe conſider the affair! Werter, what leſſons have I heard laſt night and this morning upon my connection with you! I have been obliged to hear you debaſed and run down; and I could not, I dared not ſay much in your defence." Every word was a dagger; ſhe did not know that in pity to me ſhe ſhould have concealed all that ſhe informed me of.—She told me too all the impertinent nonſenſe that would be circulated upon the occaſion, and how the malicious would triumph; how they would rejoice that my pride was humbled; and how happy it would make them, to ſee me pu-

niſhed for that want of eſteem for others, with which I had been often reproached. This is what ſhe told me, and in a manner which ſhewed the warmeſt intereſt; this is what I was forced to hear—it awakened all my paſſions, and I ſtill breathe rage and fury. Would that I could find a man who dared banter me on this event!—I would ſacrifice him inſtantly to my reſentment; it would be a relief to me to diſcharge my fury on the firſt object I meet;—a hundred times have I caught up a ſword to give vent to my oppreſſed heart. There is a noble race of horſes, which will inſtinctively open

a vein with their teeth, when they are heated by a long courſe, in order to breathe more freely—I am often tempted to open a vein, and procure for myſelf everlaſting liberty.

LETTER XLVII.

March 24.

I HAVE written to court for leave to reſign; and I hope I ſhall obtain it. You will forgive me for not having previouſly conſulted you. It was expedient for me to leave this place.—I knew all you could alledge in order to induce me to ſtay, and therefore——I beg of you to ſoften this

this news as much as you can to my mother, when you acquaint her with it. I can do nothing for myſelf; how ſhould I do any thing for others? She will undoubtedly be grieved to find, that I have ſtopped ſhort in that career which would have led directly to my being firſt a Privy Counſellor, and then Miniſter; and to ſee me thus returning to my original nothing. Argue on the ſubject as much as you will, combine all the reaſons which ſhould have induced me to ſtay; I am going, that is ſufficient. But that you may not be ignorant where I am going, I ſhall tell you that here is the Prince of —,

who

who is much pleaſed with my company, and who having heard of my intention to reſign, has invited me to his country-houſe, to paſs the ſpring months with him. He aſſures me that I ſhall be left quite at liberty; and as we agree on all ſubjects but one, I ſhall venture to accompany him.

LETTER XLVIII.

April 19.

I THANK you for your two letters. I waited for my anſwer from court before I wrote to you. I was under continual apprehenſion leaſt

leaſt my mother ſhould apply to the miniſter, in order to defeat my purpoſe. But I have received my diſmiſſion: and here it is. I will not tell you with what regret it was given to me, nor what the miniſter ſaid in his letter to me; for you would renew your lamentations. The money which I ſent to my mother for, I ſhall not want; for the hereditary Prince has made me a preſent—and it was accompanied by a few words which affected me almoſt to tears.

LETTER

LETTER XLIX.

May 5.

I SET out to-morrow; and as my native place is but ſix miles out of the great road, I have a mind to ſee it, and call back to my remembrance the happy dreams of my childhood. I ſhall go in at the ſame gate which I came through with my mother, when after my father's death ſhe left that delightful retreat to immure herſelf in your melancholy town. Adieu, my dear friend. You ſhall hear of my expedition.

LETTER

LETTER L.

May 9.

I Performed my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity, with all the devotion of a real pilgrim: I was affected much beyond what I expected. Near the great elm, which is a quarter of a league from the village on the ſide of S—, I got out of the carriage, and ſent it on before, that alone and on foot I might more fully and without interruption enjoy all my recollections. I was then under the ſame elm which formerly was the term and object of my walks. How things have ſince changed!

changed! Then, in happy ignorance, I languiſhed after a world I did not know, and where I hoped to find all the enjoyments my heart ſo often felt the want of: and now I was returned from that world ſo much deſired; and what, my dear friend, did I bring back? Diſappointed hopes, unſucceſsful plans.

I obſerved the oppoſite mountains, and I remembered how often they had excited my wiſhes. I uſed to ſit ſometimes for whole hours looking at them, and ardently longing to wander under the ſhade of thoſe woods which make ſo delightful an object in the diſtance. With what

reluctance

reluctance I quitted this favourite ſpot when the play-hour was over, and my leave of abſence expired! As I drew near to the village, I recogniſed all the little gardens and ſummer-houſes that I was acquainted with. I diſliked the new ones, as I do all the alterations that have been made ſince my time. I went into the village, and felt quite at home again. I cannot, my dear friend, in detail relate all the circumſtances with which I was affected; however intereſting they were to me, there would be a ſameneſs in the relation. I had intended to lodge in the market-place near our old houſe:

houſe: as ſoon as I entered, I perceived that the ſchool-room, where we were taught by that good old woman, was turned into a ſhop. I remembered the ſorrow, the dullneſs, the anxiety, the oppreſſion of heart I had experienced in that confinement. Every ſtep was marked by ſome particular impreſſion. A pilgrim in the holy land does not meet with ſo many ſpots which bring tender recollections to his mind; and ſcarcely feels more devotion. One ſenſation I will relate, of the thouſand I experienced: Having followed the courſe of the ſtream to a farm, which was formerly a favourite walk

likewiſe,

likewiſe, and where we uſed to divert ourſelves with making ducks and drakes upon the water; I was moſt forcibly ſtruck with the memory of what I then was, when I looked at the water as it flowed, and form'd romantic ideas of the countries it was going to paſs through. My imagination was ſoon exhauſted; but the water continued flowing farther and farther, till I was bewildered in the idea of inviſible diſtance. Exactly ſuch, my dear friend, were the thoughts of our good anceſtors.—And when Ulyſſes talks of the immeaſurable ſea, and the unlimited earth, is it not more

natural, more true, more according to our feelings, than when in this philoſophic age, every ſchool-boy thinks himſelf a prodigy, becauſe he can repeat after his maſter that the earth is round?

I am at preſent with the Prince at one of his hunting-lodges. He is an honeſt and unaffected man, and I am very well pleaſed with him: what I diſlike, is his talking of things which he has only read or heard of, and always exactly under the ſame point of view that they have been preſented to him. I am ſorry to ſay that he values my underſtanding and talents much more highly

highly than that mind, for which alone I value myſelf—which alone is the ſource of talents, of happineſs, of miſery, of every thing—which makes me all I am, and is ſolely mine.—Any body may know all that I know.

LETTER LI.

May 25.

I HAD a ſcheme in my head, which I intended to conceal from you till it was accompliſhed;—now that it has failed I may as well tell it to you. I had a mind to go into the army; I had long been deſirous

of it, and it was my chief reaſon for coming here with the Prince. He is a general in the ſervice of the ——. As we were walking juſt now, I communicated my deſign to him: he did not approve it; and it would have been madneſs not to have yielded to his reaſon.

LETTER LII.

June 11.

SAY what you pleaſe, I can ſtay in this place no longer. What ſhould I do here? I am weary of it. The Prince, it is true, treats me in all reſpects as his equal, but ſtill I

am

am not at my eaſe here. Beſides, we are at bottom very different men. He has a good underſtanding, but quite of the common kind; and the pleaſure I have in his converſation, is only ſuch as I receive from reading a well-written book. I ſhall ſtay a week more here, and then travel about again. What I have done beſt, ſince I came to this place, are ſome drawings. The Prince has ſome taſte for the arts, and would have more, if it was not cramped by cold rules and technical terms. I often loſe all patience, when with a glowing imagination I am giving to art and nature the moſt lively expreſ-

ſion, and he ſtops me with learned criticiſms, upon which he highly values himſelf.

LETTER LIII.

June 18.

WHERE am I going? I will tell you in confidence: I am obliged to continue here a fortnight longer; after that, I thought it would be expedient for me to ſee the mines of ——. But 'tis no ſuch thing; I only deceive myſelf: the real truth is, that I wiſh to be near Charlotte again. I am not the dupe of my heart, but I obey its dictates.

LETTER

LETTER LIV.

July 29.

OH! No; 'tis well—'tis all well. —Me her huſband! Eternal Power that gave me being, if thou hadſt deſtined ſuch happineſs for me, my whole life would have been one continual thankſgiving! But I will not murmur againſt thee: forgive my tears, forgive my fruitleſs vows! —She might have been mine; I might have folded in theſe arms all that is lovely under Heaven!—My whole frame is convulſed when Albert puts his arm round her waiſt.

Shall I ſay it?—And why ſhould

I not ſay it?—She would have been happier with me than with him. Albert was not made for her: he wants a certain ſenſibility; he wants —in ſhort their hearts do not beat in uniſon. Ah! my dear friend, how often in reading an intereſting paſſage, where my heart and Charlotte's ſeemed to meet; and when our ſentiments were unfolded by the ſtory and ſituation of a fictitious character, how often have I ſeen and felt, that we were made to underſtand each other? Alas, my friend! —But this worthy man loves her with all his ſoul; and what does not ſuch love deſerve?

I have

I have been interrupted by an inſufferable viſit. I have dried up my tears, and my thoughts are a little diſſipated. Adieu, my deareſt friend.

LETTER LV.

August 4.

I AM not alone unfortunate; men are all diſappointed in their hopes, and all their ſchemes fall to the ground. I have been to ſee the good woman under the lime-trees. The eldeſt boy ran to meet me; he ſcreamed for joy, and that brought out his mother. She looked very melancholy. "Alas! my good Sir," ſaid

ſaid ſhe, "our poor little Jenny is dead;" (that was the youngeſt of her children). I anſwered nothing—"And my huſband," ſhe continued, "came back from Holland without any money: he was taken ill with a fever; and if ſome good people had not relieved him, he muſt have been obliged to beg his bread along the road. I could ſay nothing to her: I gave ſome money to the boy; and ſhe offered me ſome apples, which I accepted, and full of ſorrow left the place.

LETTER

LETTER LVI.

August 21.

MY ſenſations change with the rapidity of lightning. Sometimes a ray of joy ſeems to give me new life —Alas! it diſappears in a moment. When I am thus loſt in reveries, I cannot help ſaying to myſelf—"If Albert was to die, I ſhould be—yes, Charlotte would"—and I purſue the chimera till it leads me to the edge of a precipice, from which I ſtart back and ſhudder. When I go out at the ſame gate, when I take the ſame road which conducted me for the firſt time towards

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wards Charlotte, my heart ſinks within me; and I feel with bitterneſs how different I then was, from what I now am. Yes, all, all is vaniſhed. Not a ſentiment, not a pulſation of my heart is the ſame; no traces of the paſt remain. If the ſhade of a departed prince could return to viſit the ſuperb palaces he had built in happy times, and left to a beloved ſon; and if he found them overthrown and deſtroyed by a more powerful neighbour, ſuch would be his ſenſations.

LETTER

LETTER LVII.

September 3.

I Sometimes cannot comprehend how it is that ſhe loves another —how ſhe dares love another, whilſt I bear her about me in this heart— whilſt ſhe entirely fills and engroſſes it—whilſt I think only of her, know only her, and have nothing but her in the world.

LETTER LVIII.

September 6.

IT coſt me much to part with the blue frock which I wore the firſt time I danced with Charlotte;

I could not poſſibly appear in it any longer: but I have made another exactly like it, and with a buff waiſtcoat and breeches.

It has not however the ſame effect upon me. I don't know—but I hope in time it will be as dear to me.

LETTER LIX.

September 15.

ONE is tempted to wiſh one's ſelf at the devil, when one thinks of all the contemptible beings which Heaven ſuffers to crawl upon this earth, without any feeling, with-

out any idea of the things which may be intereſting to others. You remember the walnut-trees at S. under which I ſat with Charlotte at the worthy old vicar's. Theſe beautiful, theſe beloved trees, how they adorned the parſonage-yard! their ſhade was refreſhing, it was reſpectable; for it carried one back with pleaſing ideas to the good paſtors who planted them. The ſchoolmaſter often mentioned the name of him who planted the oldeſt of them. He had it from his grandfather. This vicar was an excellent man, and under theſe trees his reſpectable memory was ever preſent to me.

The

The ſchool-maſter had the tears in his eyes yeſterday, when he told us they were cut down.—Cut down! I could in my fury murder the ruffian who ſtruck the firſt ſtroke: I that ſhould grieve if I had two ſuch trees in my court, and one died of old age; I muſt endure this. I have however one conſolation—ſuch is ſentiment—the whole village murmurs at it, and I hope the good peaſants will make no more preſents to the vicar's wife, and that ſhe will ſuffer for the miſchief ſhe has done in the pariſh—for ſhe did it, the wife of the preſent incumbent (our good old man is dead) a tall, meagre, wrinkled,

wrinkled, wan creature, who is ſo far right to diſregard the world, that the world totally diſregards her; an antiquated ſcold, who affects to be learned, pretends to examine the canonical books, lends her aſſiſtance towards the new reformation, moral and critical, of the Chriſtian religion, and ſhrugs up her ſhoulders at the mention of Lavater's enthuſiaſm. Her health is deſtroyed, and hinders her from having any enjoyment here below. Such a being only could have cut down my walnut-trees. No, I cannot get over it. Would you hear her reaſons? the leaves which fell from them made the

court wet and dirty; the trees obſtructed the light; little boys threw ſtones at the nuts, and the noiſe affected her nerves, and diſturbed her profound meditations when ſhe was weighing in the balance Kennicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I found that all the pariſh was diſpleaſed, and particularly the old people, I aſked them why they ſuffered it?—"Ah! Sir," they ſaid, "when the ſteward orders, what can we poor peaſants do?" However one thing has happened very well; the ſteward and the vicar (who for once thought to reap ſome advantage from the caprices of his wife)

wife) intended to divide the trees between them. The revenue-office being informed of it, took poſſeſſion of the trees, and ſold them to the beſt bidder. There they ſtill lie on the ground. Oh! if I was a ſovereign prince, how I would deal with the vicar, the ſteward, and the revenue-office!—But if I was a prince, what ſhould I care for the trees that grew in my country?

LETTER LX.

October 10.

ONLY to look at her dark eyes, is to me happineſs. What grieves me is, that Albert does not

ſeem ſo happy as he expected to be—as I ſhould have been.—If—I don't much love ſuſpenſions; but here I cannot expreſs myſelf any otherwiſe.—Heavens! and am I not explicit enough?

LETTER LXI.

October 12.

OSSIAN has taken the place of Homer in my heart and imagination. To what a world does the illuſtrious bard carry me! To wander in heaths and wilds, ſurrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, in

in which, by the feeble light of the moon, we diſcover the ſpirits of our anceſtors;—to hear from the top of the mountains, amidſt the roaring of the waters, their plaintive ſounds iſſuing from deep caverns, and the ſorrowful lamentations of a maiden who ſighs and dies on the moſſy tomb of the warrior by whom ſhe was adored! I meet this bard with ſilver hair; he wanders in the valley, he ſeeks the footſteps of his fathers. Alas! he finds only their tombs! Then contemplating the pale moon as ſhe ſinks beneath the waves of the foaming ſea, the memory of time paſt ſtrikes the mind

of the hero;—thoſe times when the approach of danger filled his heart with exultation, and gave vigour to his nerves—when the moon ſhone upon his bark, laden with the ſpoils of his enemies, and lighted up his triumph—when I read in his countenance his deep ſorrow—when I ſee his ſinking glory tottering towards the grave—when he caſts a look on the cold earth which is to cover him, and cries out, "The traveller will come, he will come who has ſeen my beauty, and he will aſk, where is the bard, where is the illuſtrious ſon of Fingal? he will walk over my tomb, and he will ſeek me

in vain!"—Then, O my friend! I could inſtantly, like a true and noble knight, draw my ſword, and reſcue my prince from long and painful languor, and afterwards plunge it into my own breaſt, to follow the demi-god whom my hand ſet free.

LETTER LXII.

October 19.

ALAS! the void, the fearful void I feel in my boſom—Sometimes I think, if I could but once, only once preſs her to my heart, I ſhould be happy.

LETTER LXIII.

26th October.

I AM convinced, my dear friend, more and more convinced, that the exiſtence of any one being whatever is of little, very little conſequence. A friend of Charlotte's came juſt now to make her a viſit: I withdrew, and took up a book in the next room; but I could not read, and therefore I write to you. I hear their converſation: they are only talking of the news of the town; one is going to be married, another is ill, very ill. "She has a dry cough and frequent faintings; ſhe cannot recover,

recover," ſays one. "N. is very ill too," ſays Charlotte. "He begins to ſwell already," anſwers the other: And my imagination ſuddenly carries me to their ſick beds; I ſee them ſtruggling againſt approaching death, in all the agonies of pain and horror. I ſee them—And theſe good little women are talking of it with the ſame indifference that one would mention the death of a ſtranger.—And when I look at the apartment in which I now am, when I ſee Charlotte's apparel lying round me; here upon this little table are her earrings, Albert's papers, all the things which are ſo familiar to me, the very

inkſtand I now uſe; and that I think what I am to this family — every thing — my friends eſteem me, are made happy by me, and my heart cannot conceive that any thing could exiſt without them; and yet if I was now to go, if I was to quit this circle, would they feel, how long would they feel that void in their life, which the loſs of me would leave? How long — yes, ſuch is the frailty of man, that there where he moſt feels his own exiſtence, where his preſence makes a real and a ſtrong impreſſion, even in the memory of thoſe who are dear to him; there alſo he muſt periſh and vaniſh away, and that ſo quickly!

LETTER

LETTER LXIV.

October 27.

I COULD tear open my boſom, I could beat my head againſt the wall, when I ſee how difficult it is to communicate our ideas, our ſenſations to others; to make them enter intirely into our feelings. I cannot receive from another the love, the joy, the warmth, the pleaſure, that I do not naturally poſſeſs; nor with a heart glowing with the moſt lively affection, can I make the happineſs of one in whom the ſame warmth and energy are not inherent.

LETTER

LETTER LXV.

October 30.

A Hundred times have I been upon the point of catching her in my arms! What torment it is to ſee ſuch lovelineſs, ſuch charms, paſſing and repaſſing continually before one, and not dare to touch them! To touch is ſo natural: Do not children touch every thing that they ſee? and I!——

LETTER LXVI.

November 3.

HOW often when I have lain down in my bed have I wiſhed never to wake again? and in the morning I open my eyes, I again behold the ſun, and I am wretched. Oh! why am I not fanciful and hypochondriacal? Why cannot I attribute my woes to intemperate ſeaſons, to diſappointed ambition, to the perſecutions of an enemy? for then this inſupportable load of diſcontent would not reſt wholly upon myſelf. But, wretched that I am! I feel it but too ſenſibly, I alone am the

cauſe

cauſe of my unhappineſs; this ſame boſom which formerly contained a ſource of delight, is now the ſource of all my torments. Am I not the ſame man who formerly felt only agreeable ſenſations? who every ſtep he took ſaw paradiſe before him, and whoſe heart was expanded, and full of benevolence to the whole world. But this heart is now dead, dead to all ſentiment: my eyes are dry, and my ſenſes, no longer refreſhed by ſoft tears, wither away, and periſh, and conſume my brain. My ſufferings are great: I have loſt the only charm of my life; that active ſacred power, which created

worlds

worlds around me; it is no more. From my window I ſee the diſtant hills; the riſing ſun breaks through the miſts, opens wide the proſpect, and illuminates the country. I ſee the ſoft ſtream gently winding through the willows ſtripped of their leaves. Nature diſplays all her beauties before me, exhibits the moſt enchanting ſcenes, and my heart is unmoved; I remain blind, inſenſible, petrified. Often have I implored Heaven for tears, as the labourer prays for dews to moiſten the parched corn.

But, I feel it, God does not grant ſun-ſhine or rain to importunate entreaties.

treaties. Thoſe times, the memory of which now torments me, why were they ſo fortunate? it was becauſe I then waited for the bleſſings of the Eternal with patience, and received them with a grateful and feeling heart.

LETTER LXVII.

November 8.

CHARLOTTE has reproved me for my exceſſes, with ſo much tenderneſs and goodneſs!—In order to forget myſelf, my dear friend, I have for ſome time paſt drank more wine than uſual—

"Don't do it," ſaid ſhe; "think of Charlotte."—The neceſſary advice to think of Charlotte!—I do think of you, and yet 'tis not *thinking* of you; you are always before my eyes, you are in my heart: This very morning I was ſitting in the place where you ſtopped the laſt time.—Immediately ſhe changed the ſubject. My dear friend, I am no longer any thing, ſhe makes me juſt what ſhe pleaſes.

LETTER LXVIII.

November 15.

I THANK you, my good friend, for intereſting yourſelf ſo kindly in what relates to me, and for the good advice you give me; and I beg of you to make yourſelf eaſy. Leave me to my ſufferings; ſurrounded as I am, I have ſtill ſtrength enough to endure them to the end. I revere our religion; you know I do: I am ſenſible that it often gives ſtrength to the feeble, and comfort to the afflicted. — But has it, ſhould it have this effect on all men equally? Conſider this vaſt univerſe,

verſe, and you will find millions for whom it never has exiſted; and millions, whether it is preached to them or not, for whom it never will exiſt. —Do not give a wrong conſtruction to this, I beg of you. I don't love vain diſputes on ſubjects which we are all equally ignorant of. What is the deſtiny of man?—to fill up the meaſure of his ſufferings, and drink up the bitter draught.—And if the cup appeared bitter even to the Son of the Moſt High, why ſhould I affect a fooliſh pride, and ſay my cup is ſweet? Why ſhould I be aſhamed to tremble in that fearful moment, when my ſoul ſhall be

ſuſpended between exiſtence and annihilation—when diſſolution, like a flaſh of lightning, ſhall illuminate the dark gulf of futurity—when every thing ſhakes around me, and the whole world vaniſhes away?—This is the voice of a creature oppreſſed beyond all reſource, and who feels with terror that he cannot eſcape deſtruction.—"My God! my God! why haſt thou forſaken me?"—Should I be aſhamed to uſe this expreſſion?—He who ſpreads out the heavens as it were a garment, felt terror himſelf.

LETTER

LETTER LXIX.

November 20.

CHARLOTTE does not know, does not feel, that ſhe is preparing for me a poiſon which will deſtroy us both; and this deadly poiſon which ſhe preſents to me I ſwallow it in large draughts. What mean thoſe looks of kindneſs which ſhe ſometimes beſtows upon me, that complacency with which ſhe hears the ſentiments that ſometimes eſcape me, and the tender pity which appears in her countenance? Yeſterday when I took leave of her, ſhe held out her hand to me, and ſaid,

" Adieu, my dear Werter."—*Dear Werter.*—It was the firſt time ſhe ever called me dear; the ſound ſunk deep into my heart: I have repeated it a hundred times ſince; and when I went to bed, I ſaid, " Good night, *my dear Werter.*"—I recollected myſelf, and laughed.

LETTER LXX.

November 24.

CHARLOTTE is ſenſible of my ſufferings. I found her alone, and was ſilent: ſhe looked ſtedfaſtly at me; the fire of genius, the charms of beauty were fled. But I ſaw in her

her countenance an expreſſion much more touching;—the expreſſion of ſoft pity, and the tendereſt concern.—Why was I withheld from throwing myſelf at her feet? Why did I not dare to take her in my arms, and anſwer her by a thouſand kiſſes?—She had recourſe to her harpſicord, and in a low and ſweet voice accompanied it with melodious ſounds. Her lips never appeared ſo lovely; they ſeemed but juſt to open to receive the notes of the inſtrument, and return half the vibration.—But who could expreſs ſuch ſenſations! I was ſoon overcome, and bending down, I pro-

nounced this vow; "Beautiful lips, which celeſtial ſpirits guard, never will I ſeek to profane you." And yet I wiſh—Oh! my friend, 'tis like drawing a curtain before my heart—only to taſte this felicity, and die and expiate my crimes.—My crimes!

LETTER LXXI.

November 30.

IT is all over; I ſee it, my fate is decided. Every thing encreaſes my woes; every thing points out my deſtiny. To-day again—

I went to walk by the river-ſide, about

about dinner-time, for I could not eat. The country was gloomy and deſerted; a cold and damp eaſterly wind blew from the mountains, and black heavy clouds ſpread over the plain. I perceived a man at a diſtance in an old great coat; he was wandering amongſt the rocks, and ſeemed to be looking for plants. When I came up to him, he turned about, and I ſaw an intereſting countenance with all the marks of a ſettled melancholy; his fine black hair was flowing on his ſhoulders. "What are you looking for, friend?" ſaid I. He anſwered, with a deep ſigh, "I am looking for flowers,

and

and I can't find any." "But this is not the ſeaſon for flowers," ſaid I. "There are ſo many flowers," he ſaid, "I have in my garden, roſes, and honey-ſuckles of two ſorts, one of them I had from my father; they grow every where: I have been two whole days looking for them, and I can't find them. There are flowers too above there, yellow, and blue, and red, and that centaury which grows in ſuch pretty cluſters; I can find none of them." I aſked him what he intended to do with theſe flowers. He ſmiled, and holding up his finger with a myſterious air, ſaid, "Don't betray me, I have promiſed

promiſed my miſtreſs a noſegay."—"You did well," ſaid I. "Oh! ſhe has every thing," he anſwered, "ſhe is very rich:"—"And yet," ſaid I, "ſhe likes your noſegays." "Oh! ſhe has jewels and a crown!" he exclaimed. I aſked who ſhe was? "If the States General would but pay me," he cried out, "I ſhould be quite another man! Alas! there was a time when I was ſo happy; but that time is paſt, and I am now—" He raiſed his ſwimming eyes to Heaven.—"You were then happy!" I ſaid. "Alas! why am I not ſtill the ſame?" ſaid he. "I was ſo well, ſo gay, ſo contented—I was

like

like a fiſh in the water." An old woman who was coming towards us, called out "Henry, Henry! where are you? we have been looking every where for you; come to dinner!" "Is that your ſon?" I aſk'd her. "Yes, my poor unfortunate ſon," ſaid ſhe; "the Lord has ſent us this affliction." I aſked whether he had been long in that ſtate? "It is about ſix months," ſhe anſwered, "ſince he has been calm as he is now, and I thank Heaven for it; he was one whole year quite raving, and chained down in a mad-houſe; now he does no harm to any body, but he talks of nothing but kings

and

and emperors. He was a very good young man, and helped to maintain me; he wrote a very fine hand: and all of a ſudden he became melancholy, was ſeized with a burning fever, grew diſtracted, and is now as you ſee. If I was to tell you, Sir" —I interrupted her by aſking at what time it was that he boaſted of having been ſo happy. "Poor boy," ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile of compaſſion, "it is the time in which he was entirely out of his ſenſes; he never ceaſes to regret it: it is the time when he was confined and abſolutely raving." I was thunderſtruck. I put ſome money into his hand, and went away.

You

"You were happy!" I exclaimed, as I walked haſtily back towards the town; "you were like a fiſh in the water!" God of Heaven! is this the deſtiny of man! is he only happy before he poſſeſſes his reaſon, and after he has loſt it! You are unfortunate, and I envy your lot: Full of hopes you go to gather flowers for your princeſs—in winter!—and are grieved not to find any, and don't know why they cannot be found.—But as for me, I wander without hope, without deſign, and I return as I came. To your diſordered fancy it appears that if the States General paid you, you ſhould be

be a man of conſequence; and happy it is for you that you can attribute your ſufferings to any foreign power. You do not know, you do not feel that your wretchedneſs is in your agitated heart, in your diſordered brain, and that all the kings and potentates on earth cannot reſtore you.

Let their death be without conſolation, who can laugh at the ſick man that travels to diſtant ſprings, only to find an accumulation of diſeaſe, and a death more painful? or that can exult over the depreſſed mind, who to attain peace of conſcience, to alleviate his miſeries, makes

a pil-

a pilgrimage to the Holy Land! Every ſtep which wrings his feet in unbeaten paths, is a drop of balm to his ſoul, and each night brings new relief to his heart.—Will you dare to call this extravagance, you that raiſe yourſelves upon ſtilts to make pompous declamations?—Extravagance!—O God, thou ſeeſt my tears!—thou haſt given unto us a ſufficient portion of miſery, muſt we alſo have brethren that perſecute us, that would deprive us of all conſolation, and take away our truſt in thee, in thy love and mercy? The vine which ſtrengthens us, the root which heals us, come from thy hand

—Relief

—Relief and ſaving health are thine. —Father! whom I know not!—thou who wert wont to fill my ſoul, but now hideſt thy face from me!—call me back, ſpeak to my heart!—in vain thy ſilence would delay a ſoul which thirſts after thee!—What father would be wrathful againſt his ſon, if he appeared ſuddenly before him and fell on his neck, and cried out, "Oh, my father! forgive me if I have ſhortened my journey, if I am returned before the appointed time! —The world is every where the ſame: —labour and pain, pleaſure and reward, all were alike indifferent to me—I find happineſs only in thy

preſence, and here let me remain whatever is my fate!"—And wouldſt thou, heavenly and adored Father, baniſh this child from thy awful preſence?

LETTER LXXII.

December 1.

MY dear friend, the man I deſcribed to you, the man ſo enviable in his misfortunes, was ſecretary to Charlotte's father. He conceived an unhappy paſſion for her; he cheriſhed, concealed, and at length diſcovered it—was diſmiſſed, and became ſuch as I yeſterday ſaw

ſaw him.—Think what an impreſſion theſe few words made upon me, which Albert repeated with as much tranquillity, as perhaps you read them.

LETTER LXXIII.

December 4.

IT is all over, my dear friend; I can ſupport this ſtate no longer. To-day I was ſitting by Charlotte; ſhe was playing on her harpſicord with an expreſſion it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe to you. Her little ſiſter was dreſſing her doll upon my lap; the tears came into my eyes;

I leaned down and looked intently at her wedding-ring; my tears fell; —immediately ſhe began to play the favourite, the divine air which has ſo often enchanted me.—I felt comforted by it; but ſoon it recalled to my mind the times that are paſt — Grief, diſappointed hopes.—I began to walk with haſty ſtrides about the room—I was choaked—At length I went up to her, and with eagerneſs ſaid, "For Heaven's ſake play that no longer." She ſtopped, looked ſtedfaſtly at me, and ſaid, with a ſmile that ſunk deep into my heart, "Werter, you are indeed very ill; your moſt favourite food diſguſts you.

you. Pray go, and try to compoſe yourſelf."—I tore myſelf from her.—Great God! thou ſeeſt my torments, and thou wilt put an end to them!

LETTER LXXIV.

December 6.

HOW her image haunts me! Awake or aſleep ſhe is ever preſent to my ſoul!—Soon as I cloſe my eyes, here in this brain, where all my nerves are concentred, her dark eyes are imprinted. Here—I don't know how to deſcribe it:—but if I ſhut my eyes, hers are immediately before me like a ſea, like a

precipice, and they occupy all the fibres of my head.—What is man! that boaſted demi-god! his ſtrength fails him when moſt he wants it;—and whether he ſwims in pleaſure, or bends under a load of ſorrow, he is forced to ſtop; and whilſt he is graſping at infinity, finds he muſt return again to his firſt cold exiſtence.

LETTER LXXV.

December 8.

I FEEL, as thoſe wretches muſt have felt who were formerly ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed by devils. Sometimes

Sometimes I am ſeized with ſtrange ſtarts and motions;—it is not agony, it is not paſſion, it is an interior ſecret rage which tears my boſom, and ſeems to ſeize my throat—Wretch that I am!—Then I run, and wander amidſt the dark and gloomy ſcenes which this unfriendly ſeaſon exhibits. Laſt night I felt thus conſtrained to go out of the town. I had been told that the river, and all the brooks in the neighbourhood, had overflown their banks, and that my favourite valley was under water. I ran thither at paſt eleven o'clock; it was a gloomy and aweful ſight! the moon was behind a

cloud, but by means of a few ſcattered rays I could perceive the foaming waves rolling over the fields and meadows, and beating againſt the buſhes; the whole valley was as a ſtormy ſea, toſſed by furious winds. The moon then appeared again, and reſted on a dark cloud; the ſplendor of her light encreaſed the diſorder of nature. The echoes repeated and redoubled the roarings of the wind and the waters. I drew near to the precipice; I wiſhed and ſhuddered; I ſtretched out my arms, I leaned over, I ſighed, and loſt myſelf in the happy thought of burying all my ſufferings, all my tor-

ments,

ments, in that abyſs, and toſſing amidſt the waves. Why were my feet rooted to the earth? why could I not thus have put an end to my miſery? — But I feel it, my dear friend, my hour is not yet come. With what delight ſhould I have changed my nature, and have incorporated with the whirlwinds to rend the clouds and diſturb the waters! Perhaps I may one day quit my priſon, and taſte theſe pleaſures.

I looked ſorrowfully down upon a little ſpot where I had ſat under a willow by the ſide of Charlotte, after a ſummer's walk; that alſo was under water. I could hardly diſtin-

guiſh the tree. Alas! I then thought of the meadows, the fields round the hunting-lodge; the walks, the green receſſes, now perhaps laid waſte by the torrent; and the memory of time for ever loſt entered my heart. —Thus to the ſleeping captive, dreams recall all the bleſſings he is deprived of.—I ſtopped.—I don't reproach myſelf, I have the courage to die;— I ſhould have—I am now like an old and wretched woman, who picks dry ſticks along the hedge ſide, and begs bread from door to door, to prolong for a few moments her feeble and miſerable exiſtence.

LETTER

LETTER LXXVI.

December 17.

I KNOW not how it is, my dear friend, my imagination is full of terror! Is not my love for her the pureſt and the moſt ſacred? Is it not the love of a brother for his ſiſter? Did ever my heart form a wiſh that was criminal?—I will make no vows.—And now a dream—Oh! they were much in the right who attributed contending paſſions to powers that are foreign to us!—This very night—I tremble as I write it—this very night I held her in my arms, I preſſed her to my boſom, devoured

voured her trembling lips with kiſſes. The moſt melting ſoftneſs was in her eyes, in mine equal extaſy.—When I now at this moment recall theſe tranſports with delight, am I guilty of a crime?—Oh! Charlotte! Charlotte! 'tis all over;—my ſenſes are diſordered, and for theſe ſeven days I have not been myſelf;—my eyes are full of tears;—all places are alike to me; in none am I at peace;—I deſire nothing, I aſk nothing.—Ah! 'twere better far that I ſhould depart!

[*The Editor to the Reader.*

IN order to give a connected account of the laſt days of Werter, I am obliged to interrupt the courſe of his letters by a narration; the materials for which were furniſhed to me by Charlotte, Albert, his own ſervant, and ſome other witneſſes.

THE paſſion of Werter had inſenſibly diminiſhed the harmony which ſubſiſted between Charlotte and her huſband. The affection of Albert for his wife was ſincere, but calm, and had by degrees given place to his buſineſs. He did not indeed

indeed own even to himſelf, that there was this difference between the days of courtſhip and the days of marriage; but he felt a certain diſpleaſure at the marked attentions of Werter. It was an infringement of his right, and a kind of tacit reproof. This idea increaſed the diſſatisfaction he felt from buſineſs that was continually accumulating, that was full of difficulties, and for which he was but indifferently paid. The grief which preyed on Werter's heart had exhauſted the ſtrength of his genius; he had loſt his vivacity, and his quick perceptions; in ſociety he appeared joyleſs and flat.

This

This diſpoſition had of courſe an influence upon Charlotte, who ſaw him every day; and ſhe fell into a ſort of melancholy; which Albert attributed to the progreſs of her attachment to her lover, and Werter to the deep concern ſhe felt for the alteration in Albert's conduct towards her. The want of confidence in theſe two friends made their ſociety irkſome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when Werter was there; and Werter who perceived it, after ſome fruitleſs efforts to deſiſt, took thoſe opportunities to ſee her, when he knew Albert was engaged. Diſcontent

and bitterneſs of heart encreaſed; till at length Albert very drily told his wife, that were it for the ſake of appearance only, ſhe ſhould behave differently to Werter, and not ſee him ſo often. About the ſame time, this unfortunate young man was confirmed in his reſolution to quit this world. It had long been his moſt favourite thought, and particularly ſince his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte. He had always encouraged it, but he would not commit ſuch an action with precipitation and raſhneſs; he was determined to take this ſtep like a man who knows what he is doing, is re-

ſolved

ſolved and firm, but calm and tranquil. His doubts and ſtruggles may be ſeen by the following fragment, which was found without any date amongſt his papers, and which appears to have been the beginning of a letter to his friend.]

—Her preſence, her fate, the intereſt ſhe ſhews for mine, have power ſtill to draw ſome tears from my withered brain!

One lifts up the curtain; one paſſes to the other ſide—that is all! —And why all theſe delays? why all theſe fears?—Becauſe we know not what is behind—becauſe there is no

returning—and we ſuppoſe that all is darkneſs and confuſion where there is uncertainty.—

[His mortification when he was ſecretary to the ambaſſador, was never effaced from his memory. Whenever he mentioned it, which did not often happen, it was eaſy to perceive that he thought his honour irrecoverably wounded by that adventure; and it gave him a diſtaſte for public affairs, and all political buſineſs. He then gave way entirely to thoſe ſingular opinions and ſentiments which are to be met with in theſe letters; and to a paſſion which

which knew no bounds, and which was deſtined to conſume all his remaining vigour. The continual ſameneſs and ſadneſs of his intercourſe with the moſt amiable and moſt beloved of women, whoſe peace he diſturbed—his conflicts and ſtruggles,—and the ſeeing his life paſs away without end or deſign, drove him at length to put an end to his exiſtence.]

LETTER LXXVII.

December 20.

I MUST depart!—I thank you for having repeated the word ſo ſeaſonably.—Yes, it is undoubtedly bet-

ter that I ſhould depart. However I do not entirely approve the ſcheme of returning to your neighbourhood: at leaſt I ſhould like to make a tour in my way; particularly as one may expect a froſt, and conſequently good roads. I am much pleaſed with your intention of coming to fetch me; I only deſire you to defer your journey for a fortnight, and to wait for another letter from me. One ſhould gather nothing before it is ripe, and a fortnight ſooner or later makes no great difference. Deſire my mother to think of me in her prayers; and tell her I ſincerely aſk her pardon for all the unhappineſs I have

have occaſioned her. I was doomed to give ſorrow to all thoſe whoſe happineſs I ought to have promoted. Adieu! my dear, my deareſt friend. May all the bleſſings of Heaven attend you! Adieu!

[The ſame day (which was the Sunday before Chriſtmas) Werter went in the evening to Charlotte's houſe, and found her alone. She was buſy preparing little gifts for her brothers and ſiſters, which were to be diſtributed on Chriſtmas-eve. He began talking of the delight of the children, and of that age when the opening of the door, and the

ſudden appearance of the deſert decorated with fruit and ſweetmeats, and lighted up with wax candles, cauſes ſuch tranſports of joy.—"You ſhall have a gift too, if you behave well," ſaid Charlotte, hiding her embarraſſment under a ſweet ſmile. "What do you call behaving well," ſaid he, "my dear Charlotte?" She anſwered, "Thurſday night is Chriſtmas-eve: the children are all to be here, and my father too; there is a preſent for each; do you come likewiſe—but do not come before that time."—Werter was ſtruck —"I deſire you will not; it muſt be ſo; I aſk it of you as a favour; it is

for

for my own peace and tranquillity that I aſk it; we muſt not go on in this manner any longer."—He turned away his face, walked haſtily up and down the room, and muttered between his teeth, "We muſt not go on in this manner any longer." Charlotte ſeeing the violent agitation into which theſe words had thrown him, endeavoured to divert his thoughts by different queſtions. But it was in vain. "No, Charlotte," ſaid he, "I will never ſee you more!" "And why ſo, Werter? we may, we muſt ſee one another again, only let it be with more diſcretion. Oh! why were you born with that im-

petuoſity—with that exceſſive, that ungovernable paſſion for every thing that is dear to you?" Then taking his hand, ſhe ſaid, "Let me beg of you to be more calm; what a variety of pleaſure and entertainment, your fine underſtanding, your genius and talents may furniſh you!—Be yourſelf, and get the better of an unfortunate attachment to me, who can only pity you."—He bit his lips, and looked at her with a dark and angry countenance. She continued to hold his hand—"Grant me a moment's patience, Werter?—Do you not ſee that you are deceiving yourſelf, that you are ſeeking your

own deſtruction? Why muſt it be only me—me who belong to another?—I fear, I much fear, that the impoſſibility only of poſſeſſing me, makes the deſire of it ſo ſtrong." He drew back his hand, and with wild and angry looks fixed his eyes on her—" 'Tis well!" he exclaimed," 'tis very well!—Did not Albert furniſh you with this reflection?—'tis a very profound one." " It is a reflection that any one might very eaſily make," ſhe anſwered: " What! is there not in the whole world, one woman who is at liberty, and who has the power to make you happy? Get the better of yourſelf; look for

ſuch

ſuch a woman, and believe me when I tell you that you will certainly find her. I have long apprehended for you, and for us all, the ſmall circle to which you have confined yourſelf.—Make an effort; a journey may and will diſſipate you.—Seek and find an object worthy your tenderneſs; then return here, and enjoy with us all the happineſs that can ariſe from the moſt perfect friendſhip."

"This ſpeech, my dear Charlotte," ſaid Werter, with a ſmile, but full of acrimony, "ought to be printed for the improvement of all teachers; allow me but a little time

longer, and all will be well."—"But however, Werter, don't come again before Chriſtmas-eve," ſhe ſaid.—He was going to anſwer, when Albert came in.—Werter and he cooly ſaluted each other, and with apparent embarraſſment walked up and down the room. They began to converſe on different ſubjects, but without connection, and they were ſoon dropped. Albert aſked his wife about ſome commiſſions he had given her; and finding they were not executed, he made uſe of ſome harſh expreſſions, which pierced the heart of Werter.—He wiſhed to go, but had not power to move; and in this

ſituation

ſituation he remained till eight o'clock; uneaſineſs of temper and acrimony continually increaſing; till at length the cloth was laid, and he took leave, whilſt Albert very coldly aſked him, if he would not ſtay ſupper.

Werter returned home, took the candle from his ſervant, and went up to his room alone. He was heard talking with great earneſtneſs, and walking haſtily in his room in a paſſion of tears. At length, without undreſſing, he threw himſelf on the bed; where his ſervant found him at eleven o'clock, when he ventured to go in and take off his boots.

Werter

Werter did not prevent him, but ordered him not to come in the morning till he rung.

Monday morning, the 21ſt of December, he wrote the following letter, which was found ſealed on his bureau after his death, and given to Charlotte. I ſhall inſert it in fragments, as it appears by ſeveral circumſtances to have been written.]

—It is all over.—Charlotte, I am reſolved to die; I tell it you deliberately and cooly, without any romantic paſſion. The morning of that day on which I am to ſee you for the laſt time; at the very moment when you

you read theſe lines, Oh! beſt of women! a cold grave holds the inanimate remains of that agitated unhappy man, who in the laſt moments of his life knew no pleaſure ſo great as that of converſing with you. I have paſſed a dreadful night—or rather let me call it a propitious one; for it has determined me, it has fixed my purpoſe; I am reſolved to die. When I tore myſelf from you yeſterday, my ſenſes were in the greateſt tumult and diſorder; my heart was oppreſſed; hope and every ray of pleaſure were fled for ever from me; and a petrifying cold ſeemed to ſurround my wretched being.—I could

could ſcarcely reach my room—I threw myſelf on my knees.—Heaven for the laſt time granted me the conſolation of ſhedding tears. My troubled ſoul was agitated by a thouſand ideas, a thouſand different ſchemes! at length one thought took poſſeſſion of me, and is now fixed in my heart—I will die.—It is not deſpair, it is conviction that I have filled up the meaſure of my ſufferings, that I have reached the term, and that I ſacrifice myſelf for you. Yes, Charlotte, why ſhould I not ſay it? It is neceſſary for one of us three to depart—it ſhall be Werter.—Oh! my dear Charlotte!

lotte! this heart, governed by rage and fury, has often conceived the horrid idea of murdering your husband—you—myself.—I must then depart.—When in the fine evenings of summer, you walk towards the mountains, think of me; recollect the times you have so often seen me come up from the valley; raise your eyes to the church-yard which contains my grave; and by the light of the departing sun, see how the evening-breeze waves the high grass which grows over me!—I was calm when I began my letter; but the recollection of these scenes makes me cry like a child.

[About

[About ten in the morning, Werter called his ſervant; and as he was dreſſing, told him he ſhould go in a few days, bid him lay his cloaths in order, call in his bills, fetch home the books he had lent, and give two months pay to thoſe poor people who were uſed to receive a weekly allowance from him. He breakfaſted in his room; and then mounted his horſe, and went to make a viſit to the ſteward, who was not at home. He walked penſively in the garden, and ſeemed as if he wiſhed to renew all the ideas that were moſt painful to him. The children did not ſuffer him to remain long alone;

they all went in purſuit of him, and ſkipping and dancing round him, told him, that after to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more, they were to have their Chriſtmas-gift from Charlotte; and deſcribed to him all the wonderful things their little imaginations had formed an expectation of. "To-morrow," ſaid he, "and to-morrow, and one day more!"—and he kiſſed them tenderly. He was going, but the little one ſtopped him, to whiſper in his ear, that his brothers had wrote fine compliments upon the new-year, —very fine indeed, and very long,— one for papa, and one for Albert and Charlotte,

Charlotte, and one for Mr. Werter too; and that they were to be preſented very early in the morning on new-year's day.—

This laſt ſtroke quite overcame him.—He gave ſomething to each of the children, got upon his horſe, and charging them to give his compliments to their papa, left them with tears in his eyes. He returned home about five o'clock, and ordered his ſervant to keep up the fire; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to lay his coats at the top.—He then appears to have wrote

the following fragment of his letter to Charlotte.]

—You do not expect me;—you think I ſhall obey you, and that I ſhall not ſee you again till Chriſtmas-eve. Oh! Charlotte, to-day or never! On Chriſtmas-eve you will hold in your hand this paper; you will tremble, and you will wet it with your tears.—I ought—I will—I am well pleaſed that I have fixed my reſolution.—

[At half an hour after ſix he went to Albert's; he found only Charlotte

lotte at home, who was much diſtreſſed at ſeeing him. She had, in converſation with her huſband, mentioned with ſeeming negligence, that Werter would not come there again till Chriſtmas-eve; and very ſoon afterwards Albert ordered his horſe, and notwithſtanding the rain, ſet out in order to ſettle ſome buſineſs with a ſteward in the neighbourhood. Charlotte knew that he had for a long time delayed making this viſit, which was to keep him a night from home. She felt his want of confidence, and was hurt. Alone, and full of ſorrow, ſhe recalled her paſt life, and found no cauſe of re-

proach either in her ſentiments or her conduct, or with regard to her huſband, from whom ſhe had a right to expect happineſs, and who was now the cauſe of her miſery. She then thought of Werter, and blamed, but could not hate him. A ſecret ſympathy had attached her to him from their firſt acquaintance; and now, after ſo long an intimacy, after paſſing through ſo many different ſcenes, the impreſſion was engraved on her mind for ever. At length her full heart was relieved by tears, and ſhe fell into a ſoft melancholy, in which ſhe was quite wrapt and loſt; when with infinite

aſtoniſhment

aſtoniſhment and emotion ſhe heard Werter upon the ſtairs, aſking if ſhe was at home. It was too late to deny herſelf, and ſhe had not recovered her confuſion when he came in. "You have not kept your word," ſhe cried out.—"I did not promiſe any thing," he anſwered.—"But for both our ſakes," ſaid Charlotte, "you ſhould have granted what I aſked of you."—She ſent to ſome of her friends, and deſired them to come, that they might be witneſſes of the converſation; with the idea too, that Werter thinking himſelf obliged to wait upon them home, would go away the ſooner.

He had brought ſome books; ſhe talked to him of them, and of ſome others, and introduced various indifferent ſubjects whilſt ſhe was expecting her friends; but the ſervant brought back their excuſes — one was engaged with company, and another prevented by the rain.

This unlucky circumſtance at firſt made Charlotte uneaſy, but the conſciouſneſs of her own innocence at length inſpired her with a noble confidence: and above the chimeras of Albert's brain, and conſcious of her own purity of heart, ſhe rejected her firſt intention of calling in her maid; and after playing

ing two or three minuets on the harpſicord to recover herſelf, ſhe went with great compoſure and ſat down by Werter on the ſofa. "Have you nothing to read to me?" ſhe ſaid. — He anſwered, "No." — "Open that drawer," ſaid Charlotte, "and you will find your own tranſlation of ſome of the ſongs of Oſſian; I have not yet read it; I have been waiting till you could read it to me yourſelf, but for ſome time paſt you have been good for nothing." — He ſmiled, went to fetch the manuſcript, and ſhuddered as he took it up. — He ſat down with eyes ſwimming in tears,

and

and began to read.—After reading for ſome time, he came to that affecting paſſage, where Armin deplores the loſs of his beloved daughter.

" Alone on the ſea-beat rock my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries; nor could her father relieve her. All night I ſtood on the ſhore. I ſaw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard on the ſide of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak; it died away like the evening breeze among the graſs

of

of the rocks. Spent with grief, ſhe expired; and left thee, Armin, alone! Gone is my ſtrength in the war; and fallen my pride among women!

"When the ſtorms of the mountain come, when the north lifts the waves on high, I ſit by the ſounding ſhore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the ſetting moon I ſee the ghoſts of my children. Half viewleſs they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you ſpeak in pity! They do not regard their father. I am ſad, O Carmor! nor ſmall my cauſe of woe!"

A flood of tears ſtreamed from the

the eyes of Charlotte, and gave ſome relief to the oppreſſion of heart which ſhe felt. Werter threw down the paper, ſeized her hand, and wept over it. She leaned on the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the utmoſt agitation. In this unhappy ſtory they felt their own misfortunes; together they felt them, and their tears flowed from the ſame ſource. The ardent eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and wiſhed to go from him; but ſorrow and ſoft compaſſion preſſed upon her, and weighed her down. At length

ſhe

ſhe heaved a deep ſigh to recover herſelf, and ſobbing, deſired him to go on. Werter, quite exhauſted, took up the manuſcript, and in broken accents continued.

" Why doſt thou awake me, O gale? It ſeems to ſay, I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blaſt that ſhall ſcatter my leaves. To-morrow ſhall the traveller come; he that ſaw me in my beauty ſhall come; his eyes will ſearch the field, but they will not find me."

[The whole force of theſe words fell like a ſtroke of thunder on the

heart of the unfortunate Werter. In his deſpair he threw himſelf at Charlotte's feet, ſeized her hands, and put them to his eyes and to his forehead. An apprehenſion of his fatal project for the firſt time ſtruck her: her ſenſes were bewildered; ſhe preſſed his hands, preſſed them to her boſom, and leaning towards him, with emotions of tender pity, her warm cheek touched his. Then they loſt ſight of every thing; the whole world diſappeared from before their eyes. He claſped her in his arms, ſtrained her to his boſom, and covered her trembling lips with paſſionate kiſſes. "Werter!" ſhe

cried,

cried, in a faint voice, and turned her face from him; "Werter!" and with a feeble hand put him from her. At length, with the firm determined voice of virtue, ſhe cried, "Werter!" and he was awed by it; and tearing himſelf from her arms, fell on his knees before her. Charlotte roſe, and with diſordered grief, and in a voice of love mixed with reſentment, ſaid, "This is the laſt time; Werter, you will never ſee me more!" She caſt one laſt tender look upon her unfortunate lover, then ran into her room, and bolted the door. Werter held out his arms to her, but did not dare to

detain

detain her. He continued on the ground with his head reſting on the ſofa for above half an hour, till he heard a noiſe;—it was the ſervant coming to lay the cloth. He then walked up and down the room; and when he was again left alone, he went to Charlotte's door, and in a low voice, ſaid, "Charlotte! Charlotte! but one word more, only one adieu. He ſtopped, and liſtened. She made no anſwer.—He entreated—liſtened again; then tore himſelf from the place, crying, "Adieu, Charlotte! Adieu, for ever!"

Werter ran to the gate of the town;

town; the guard knew him, and let him paſs. The night was dark and ſtormy; it rained and ſnowed. He came in about eleven. His ſervant perceived he was without a hat, but did not venture to ſay any thing; and when he undreſſed his maſter, he found his cloaths were all wet. His hat was afterwards found upon the point of a rock, where it is inconceivable that he could climb in ſuch a night, without breaking his neck. He went to bed, and ſlept till late next day. His ſervant found him writing when he carried his coffee to him. He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter.]

—For the laſt, laſt time, I now open my eyes. Alas! they will behold the ſun no more; a thick and gloomy fog hides it.—Yes! let Nature put on mourning—your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end. Charlotte! the ſentiment I now feel, ſtands alone in my mind—it is ſtrongly marked; and yet nothing appears to me more like a dream, than when I ſay, This is the laſt day. The laſt!—Charlotte, I have no idea that correſponds with this word—Laſt!—To-day I ſtand upright, I have all my ſtrength; to-morrow, cold and ſtiff, I ſhall lie extended on the ground. What is

death?

death? we do but dream when we talk of it. I have ſeen many die;—but ſuch are the limits of our feeble nature, we have no clear conceptions of the beginning or end of our exiſtence. At this moment I ſtill poſſeſs myſelf—or rather, deareſt of women! I am thine;—and the next—detached, ſeparated—perhaps for ever!—No, Charlotte, no! we now exiſt, how can we be annihilated!—What is annihilation!—this too is a mere word, a ſound which conveys no idea to my mind!—Dead! Charlotte! ſhut up in a pit, ſo deep, ſo cold, ſo dark.—I had a friend who was every thing to me in my help-

leſs youth; ſhe died: I followed her hearſe, I ſtood by the ſide of her grave, when the coffin was let down; when I heard the creaking of the cords as they were let down and drawn up, when the firſt ſhovel-full of earth was thrown in, and the coffin returned a hollow ſound, which grew fainter and fainter, till it was all covered in, I threw myſelf on the ground; my heart was ſmitten, grieved, rent; but I neither knew what had happened, nor what was to happen to me.—Death! Grave!—I underſtand not the words.

Forgive! forgive!—yeſterday—Alas! that moment ſhould have been

been the laſt of my life. I am beloved, I am beloved by her; the delightful ſenſe of it for the firſt time penetrated, enflamed my heart. My lips ſtill feel the ſacred warmth they received from thine. New torrents of delight flow in upon my heart.—Forgive me! forgive me!

Oh! I knew that I was dear to you; I ſaw it in the firſt animated look which you directed to me; I knew it the firſt time you preſſed my hand: but when I was abſent from you, when I ſaw Albert by your ſide, my doubts and fears returned.

Do you recollect the flowers you

ſent me, when at a diſagreeable and crowded aſſembly you could neither ſpeak to me, nor hold out your hand? Half the night I was on my knees before theſe flowers; they were the pledges of affection: but theſe impreſſions grew fainter, and were at length effaced.—Every thing paſſes away; but a whole eternity could not extinguiſh the flame which was yeſterday kindled by your lips, the flame I feel within me.—She loves me! theſe arms have encircled her waiſt, theſe lips have trembled upon hers; ſhe is mine.—Yes, Charlotte! you are mine for ever!

Albert is your huſband; but what

of

of that? it is for this life only.—And in this life only it is a crime to love you, to wiſh to tear you from him! This is a crime, and I puniſh myſelf for it: I have enjoyed it—I have enjoyed the full delight of it.—I drew in a balm which has revived my ſoul. From this moment you are mine — yes, Charlotte, you are mine. I go before you, I go to my father, to thy father; I ſhall carry my ſorrows to the foot of his throne, and he will give me comfort till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet you, I will claim you, and remain with you for ever in the preſence of the

Almighty. I do not dream, I do not rave; drawing near to the grave, my perceptions are more clear. We ſhall exiſt, we ſhall ſee one another again; we ſhall ſee your reſpected mother; I ſhall ſee her, I ſhall find her out, and I ſhall not be afraid to ſhew her my heart.—Your mother! your image!

[About eleven o'clock, Werter aſked his ſervant if Albert was returned: he anſwered, "Yes; for he had ſeen him go by on horſeback." Upon which Werter ſent him with the following note unſealed:

"Be

"Be ſo good to lend me your piſtols for a journey. Adieu!"

The tender Charlotte had paſſed the night in great agitation and diſtreſs; her blood boiled in her veins, and painful ſenſations rent her heart. The ardor of Werter's paſſionate embraces had, in ſpite of all her efforts, ſtolen into her boſom: at the ſame time ſhe recalled to her memory the days of her tranquillity and innocence, and they appeared to her with new charms. She dreaded the looks of her huſband, and the pointed irony of his queſtions, after he had heard of

Werter's

Werter's viſit. She had never been guilty of any falſehood, never had diſſembled, and for the firſt time ſhe felt the neceſſity of it. Her diſtreſs and repugnance made her think her fault more enormous; and yet ſhe could neither hate the author of it, nor even reſolve to ſee him no more. Melancholy and languid, ſhe was ſcarcely dreſſed when her huſband came in: his preſence was for the firſt time irkſome to her. She trembled leaſt he ſhould perceive that ſhe had been crying and had had no ſleep; and this apprehenſion encreaſed her embarraſſment. She received him with a kind of eagerneſs,

neſs, which rather betrayed remorſe and confuſion, than expreſſed any real ſatisfaction. Albert obſerved it; and after opening ſome letters, he drily aſked her, whether there was any news, and who ſhe had ſeen in his abſence? She anſwered, after ſome heſitation, "Werter ſpent an hour here yeſterday."—"He chuſes his time well," ſaid Albert; and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The preſence of a man ſhe eſteemed and loved, gave a new turn to her thoughts: ſhe recollected all his kindneſs, the generoſity of his character, his attachment to her; and ſhe reproached herſelf for having

ing ſo ill requited him. A ſecret impulſe prompted her to follow him; ſhe went to his room and took her work with her, as ſhe ſometimes uſed to do. She aſked him when ſhe went in, if he wanted any thing? he ſaid, "No," and began to write: ſhe ſat down and worked. Albert from time to time took a few turns up and down the room; and then Charlotte addreſſed ſome diſcourſe to him: but he ſcarcely made her any anſwer, and ſat down again to his bureau. This behaviour was made more painful to her, by her endeavours to hide the concern ſhe felt from it, and to reſtrain the tears which were every moment ready to flow.

ſlow. They had paſſed an hour in this irkſome ſituation, when the arrival of Werter's ſervant compleated Charlotte's diſtreſs. As ſoon as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and ſaid, "Give him the piſtols—I wiſh him a good journey." Theſe words were a thunder-ſtroke to Charlotte; ſhe got up, and tottering, walked ſlowly to the wall, with a trembling hand took down the piſtols, and by degrees wiped off the duſt. She would have made ſtill more delay, had not a look from Albert obliged her to leave off. She then delivered the fatal arms to the ſervant, without being able to ſpeak a ſingle word;

folded up her work, and went directly to her room, overcome with mortal grief, and her heart foreboding dreadful calamities. Sometimes ſhe was upon the point of going to her huſband, to throw herſelf at his feet, and to acquaint him with all that had happened the preceding evening; to tell him her fault, and her apprehenſions:—but then ſhe foreſaw that it would be uſeleſs, and that Albert would certainly not be perſuaded to go to Werter's houſe. Dinner was ſerved; and a friend of Charlotte's, whom ſhe deſired to ſtay with her, helped to ſupport the converſation. When Werter heard that Charlotte had given the piſtols

with

with her own hand to his ſervant, he received them with tranſport. He eat ſome bread, and drank a glaſs of wine, ſent his ſervant to dinner, and then began to write.]

To Charlotte in continuation.

—They have been in your hands; you wiped the duſt from them: I give them a thouſand kiſſes; you have touched them. Ah! Heaven approves and favours my deſign. It is you, Charlotte, who furniſh me with the fatal inſtruments; I wiſhed to receive my death from your hand, and from your hand I am going to receive it. I have been enquiring of my ſervant—you trembled when

you gave him the piſtols; but you did not bid me adieu.—Wretched! wretched that I am!—not one adieu! —In that moment, which unites me to you for ever, can your heart be ſhut againſt me? Oh Charlotte! ages cannot wear out the impreſſion; yet I feel that you cannot hate the man who has this paſſionate love for you.

[After dinner he had his trunk packed up, deſtroyed a great many papers, and went out to diſcharge ſome trifling debts. He returned home; and then went out again, notwithſtanding the rain, firſt to the Count's garden, and then farther

into the country. He returned when night came on, and began to write again.]

—My dear friend, I have for the laſt time ſeen the mountains, the foreſts, and the ſky. Adieu!—My deareſt mother, forgive me: my friend, I entreat you to comfort her. God bleſs you!—I have ſettled all my affairs; farewell! We ſhall ſee one another again, we ſhall ſee one another when we are more happy.

I have but ill requited you, Albert; and you forgive me.—I have diſturbed the peace of your family; I have occaſioned a want of confidence between you. Adieu! I am

going to put an end to all this. May my death remove every obſtacle to your happineſs! Albert, Albert, make that angel happy; and may the benediction of Heaven be upon you!

[He finiſhed the ſettling of his papers; tore and burned a great many, others he ſealed up and directed to his friend. They contained looſe thoughts and maxims, ſome of which I have ſeen. At ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought to him, and then diſmiſſed his ſervant; who with the reſt of the family lay in another part of the houſe. The

ſervant

ſervant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be ſooner ready the next morning, his maſter having told him that the poſt-horſes would be at the door before ſix o'clock.]

Werter in continuation to Charlotte.

—Paſt eleven o'clock. All is ſilent round me, and my ſoul is calm!—I render thanks to thee, O God! that thou granteſt to me in theſe laſt moments warmth and vigor.

I draw near to the window, my dear friend, and through clouds which are driven rapidly along by impetuous winds, I ſee ſome ſtars. Heavenly bodies! You will not

fall; the Eternal ſupports both you and me! I have alſo ſeen the greater bear—favorite of all the conſtellations; for when I left you in the evening it uſed to ſhine oppoſite your door. How often have I looked at it with rapture! how often raiſed my hands towards it, and made it a witneſs of my felicity! And ſtill—Oh! Charlotte! what is there which does not bring your image before me? Do you not ſurround me on all ſides; and have I not, like a child, collected together all the little things which you have made ſacred by your touch?

The profile, which was ſo dear me, I return to you, Charlotte; and I

pray

pray you to have a regard for it. Thouſands of kiſſes have I imprinted on it, and a thouſand times have I addreſſed myſelf to it as I went out and came in.

I have wrote a note to your father, to beg he will protect my remains. At the corner of the church-yard, which looks towards the fields, there are two lime-trees; it is there I wiſh to reſt: this is in your father's power, and he will do it for his friend. Join your entreaties to mine. Perhaps pious Chriſtians will not chuſe that their bodies ſhould be interred near the corpſe of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah! let me then be laid in ſome remote valley;

or by the ſide of the highway, that the Prieſt and the Levite, when they paſs my tomb, may lift their eyes to Heaven, and render thanks to the Lord, whilſt the Samaritan gives a tear to my fate.

Charlotte! I do not ſhudder now that I hold in my hand the fatal inſtrument of my death. You preſent it to me, and I do not draw back. All, all is now finiſhed;—this is the accompliſhment of all my hopes; thus all my vows are fulfilled!

Why had I not the ſatisfaction to die for you, Charlotte? to ſacrifice myſelf for you?—And could I reſtore peace and happineſs to your boſom, with what reſolution, with what

pleaſure

pleaſure ſhould I meet my fate! But to a choſen few only it is given to ſhed their blood for thoſe who are dear to them, and augment their happineſs by the ſacrifice.

I wiſh, Charlotte, to be buried in the cloaths I now wear: you have touched them, and they are ſacred. I have aſked this favour too of your father.—My ſoul hovers over my grave.—My pockets are not to be ſearched.—The knot of pink ribband, which you wore on your boſom the firſt time I ſaw you, ſurrounded by your children—(Dear children! I think I ſee them playing round you; give them a thouſand kiſſes, and tell them the

fate

fate of their unfortunate friend. Ah! at that firſt moment, how ſtrongly was I attracted to you! how unable ever ſince to looſe myſelf from you!)—This knot of ribband is to be buried with me; you gave it to me on my birth-day. — Be at peace; let me entreat you, be at peace!—

They are loaded — the clock ſtrikes twelve—I go — Charlotte! Charlotte! Farewell! Farewell!

[One of the neighbours ſaw the flaſh, and heard the report of the piſtol; but every thing remaining quiet, he thought no more of it.

At

At ſix in the morning, his ſervant went into the room with a candle. He found his maſter ſtretched on the floor and weltering in his blood: he took him up in his arms, and ſpoke to him, but received no anſwer. Some ſmall ſymptoms of life ſtill appearing, the ſervant ran to fetch a ſurgeon, and then went to Albert's. Charlotte heard the gate-bell ring; an univerſal tremor ſeized her: ſhe waked her huſband, and both got up. The ſervant, all in tears, told them the dreadful event. Charlotte fell ſenſeleſs at Albert's feet.

When the ſurgeon came to the unfortunate Werter, he was ſtill lying on the floor, and his pulſe beat:

but the ball going in above his eye, had pierced through the ſkull. However, a vein was opened in his arm; the blood came, and he ſtill continued to breathe.

It was ſuppoſed, by the blood round his chair, that he committed this raſh action, as he was ſitting at his bureau; that he afterwards fell on the floor—He was found lying on his back, near the window. He was dreſſed in a blue frock and buff waiſtcoat, and had boots on. Every body in the houſe and in the neighbourhood, and in ſhort people from all parts of the town, ran to ſee him. Albert came in: Werter was laid on his bed, his head was bound up,

and the paleneſs of death was on his face. There were ſtill ſome ſigns of life; but every moment they expected him to expire. He had drank only one glaſs of wine. Emilia Galoth was lying open upon his bureau.

I will ſay nothing of Albert's great diſtreſs, nor of the ſituation of Charlotte.—

The old Steward, as ſoon as he heard of this event, hurried to the houſe: he embraced his dying friend and wept bitterly. His eldeſt boys ſoon followed him on foot; they threw themſelves on their knees, by the ſide of Werter's bed, in the utmoſt deſpair, and kiſſed his hands

and

and face. The eldeſt, who was his favourite, held him in his arms till he expired; and even then he was taken away by force. At twelve Werter breathed his laſt. The Steward, by his preſence and his precautions, prevented any diſturbance amongſt the populace; and in the night the body of Werter was buried in the place he had himſelf choſen. The Steward and his ſons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to do it. Charlotte's life was deſpaired of. The body was carried by labourers, and no prieſt attended.

FINIS.

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